DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 418 780 PS 026 287

AUTHOR Reid, Kristen; Temple, Judy
TITLE School-Age Child Care: Texas School District Involvement: A Report.
INSTITUTION Texas Work and Family Clearinghouse, Austin.; Texas Univ., Austin. School of Social Work.
SPONS AGENCY Texas Workforce Commission, Austin.
PUB DATE 1997-08-00
NOTE 18p.
AVAILABLE FROM Publication Center, Texas Work and Family Clearinghouse, Texas Workforce Commission, 101 East 15th Street, Room 416T, Austin, TX 78778-0001; phone: 512-936-3228; fax: 512-936-3255; World-Wide Web: www.twc.state.tx.us/wrkfrcdev/wfchp.html; e-mail: wkfamily@mail.capnet.state.tx.us (single copy, free).
PUB TYPE Reports - Research (143)
EDRS PRICE EDRS Price MF01 Plus Postage. PC Not Available from EDRS.
DESCRIPTORS Administrator Attitudes; *After School Programs; Day Care Centers; Elementary Education; Financial Problems; Program Attitudes; Program Descriptions; *School Age Day Care; School District Size; *School Districts; State Surveys
IDENTIFIERS Child Care Costs; Program Characteristics; Quality Indicators; Texas

ABSTRACT

With increasing numbers of parents at work or in training and education programs when children get out of school, the existence and quality of school-age child care (SACC) affects not only families, but the community as a whole. Texas school district involvement with SACC was examined, and qualities of model programs and barriers to developing SACC programs were ascertained. In 1995, over 80 percent of superintendents or designated representatives from 1,046 public school districts responded to a survey examining the availability and components of school district-assisted SACC programs. Barriers to implementing SACC were also explored. Findings indicated that larger districts were more likely than smaller ones to have SACC programs. The greatest challenges to providing SACC were funding, transportation, overburdened teachers, and administrators. Most programs were housed in elementary schools, and 85 percent shared space with other activities. About half the districts participated in program development, although non-profit agencies were primarily responsible for SACC program development. The most commonly offered activities were indoor time, outdoor time, homework help, structured activities, activity centers, small group activities, and sports/physical activities. Problems associated with district-assisted SACC programs were the wear on the facility, costs to parents, and difficulty in gaining access to school facilities. Interviews with experts revealed that although they considered most Texas SACC programs to be "adequate," the programs did not meet the standards for a model program. Issues raised by experts included funding and affordable care, educating parents, rural area needs, middle school children's needs, hours of operation, space availability, school responsibility, and outside agency SACC management. (Author/KB)

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)
This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.
Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.
Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

ED 418 780

School-Age Child Care: Texas School District Involvement

A REPORT

A Project of the
Child Care/Work and Family Clearinghouse
Texas Workforce Commission

PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE AND DISSEMINATE THIS MATERIAL IN MICROFICHE ONLY HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

Elizabeth Sifuentes

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

2B

Elizabeth Sifuentes

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

School-Age Child Care: Texas School District Involvement

Produced by the **Child Care/Work and Family Clearinghouse**
Texas Workforce Commission

Bill Hammond
Chairman and Commissioner Representing Employers
T. P. O' Mahoney
Commissioner Representing Labor
Diane D. Rath
Commissioner Representing Public
Mike Sheridan
Executive Director

in partnership with the **Center for Social Work Research**
School of Social Work, The University of Texas at Austin

Project Director: Laura Lein
Project Writers: Kristen Reid
Judy Temple
Project Staff: Pamela Hormuth
Carol M. Lewis
Audrey Steiner
Tam Perry

Design by Stanley Gilbert
Photography by Rick Hastie

August 1997

Table of Contents

Introduction 3
- Parental Strategies for After-School Care 3
  - "Band Aid Approach" 3
  - Programs at Public Schools 3
  - SACC outside Public Schools 4
- Programs Coordinated through School Districts 4
- Report Content 4

Texas School Districts Today 5
- Results of 1995 Survey 5
  - Survey of School-Age Child Care 5
  - District Size as a Factor 5
  - Challenges to Providing SACC 6
  - District and Agency Responsibilities 6
  - Appropriate Sites 6
  - District Involvement in Program Development 8
  - Problems Associated with District-Assisted SACC Programs 9

What the Experts Say 10
- Components of Model SACC Programs 10
  - Safety and Security 10
  - Social Growth and Leadership Skills 10
  - Parental and Societal Benefits 11
  - Support for Children of Low-Income Families 11
- The Down Side 11
  - Funding and Affordable Care 12
  - Educating Parents about the Importance of SACC 12
  - Rural Area Needs 12
  - Needs of Middle School Children 12
  - Hours of Operation 12
  - Spaces 12
  - School Responsibility 12
  - Outside Agency SACC Management 12

Conclusions 13
- Factors for Success 13
  - Funding 13
  - Staffing 13
  - Program 14
  - School/Program Relations 14

Works Cited 15

School-age child care has received only peripheral attention in Texas. Nevertheless, it is of great importance to the health, safety, and education of major segments of Texas's young population.

Introduction

Care of school-age girls and boys during times when parents are unavailable is a subject commanding increasing attention. Experts find that the length of time children go unsupervised and the activities they engage in without supervision are significant predictors of emotional, behavioral, and academic problems. With increasing numbers of parents on the job or in training and education programs when their children get out of school, the existence and quality of school-age child care (SACC) can affect not only children and their parents, but the community as a whole.

Appropriate SACC programming lets children play and participate in energetic physical activity after a day of school restraints, and helps them complete their homework consistently, explore and reinforce ideas and skills introduced during the school day, and develop social, physical, and cognitive skills. After-school programs may prevent vandalism, delinquency, and other crimes that accompany lack of supervision, and they also provide a safe haven for children who might not be in protective environments otherwise. In addition, the provision of breakfast in before-school care, and a snack after school affords some children important opportunities to eat nutritious food.

After-school care can also provide a place for children during summer vacations and other school holidays, which rarely coincide with time off for working parents. Parents experience less stress and are more productive on the job when they are comfortable with supplementary care arrangements for their children (Galinsky et al. 1993).

PARENTAL STRATEGIES FOR AFTER-SCHOOL CARE

Parental strategies for after-school care follow several different formats:

"Band Aid" Approach

Parents are often limited in their options. Under the pressures of their employment and education and training programs, parents choose among the SACC possibilities available in their areas. Often parents have to make do with what they can find or afford -- taking a "band aid" approach. Some parents take or send their children to different locations and activities on different days. These can range from Little League and Scouts, to swimming or music lessons, or to the library reading hour. Many of these options assume the parents' availability to transport the children when they get out of school.

Programs at Public Schools

A number of school districts have after-school programs on site, typically housed in the cafeteria or gym, which are run by outside agencies. Not-for-profit organizations such as Extend-A-Care, the Young Men's Christian Association (YMCA), Camp Fire, and Clayton Child Care, and a growing number of for-profit organizations such as Children's World all provide SACC programs within schools in different parts of Texas.

A few districts run their own programs which range from extended-day schedules in

5 BEST COPY AVAILABLE

which physical education teachers provide sports activities for children, to drop-in tutoring and learning projects with set curricula. Some after-school efforts represent a collaboration among schools, parents, and child care agencies. In this report the term "district-assisted" SACC programs refers to all programs receiving any in-kind or cash assistance from school districts.

SACC outside Public Schools

Boys and Girls Clubs and other organizations run neighborhood drop-in programs. Some Parks and Recreation departments and Community Education initiatives offer after-school activities or child care programs, as do a few public libraries. Child care centers sometimes include space for school-age children, as do a number of church schools and private schools, which generally limit enrollment in their SACC programs to their own students. However, these alternatives vary widely in quality.

PROGRAMS COORDINATED THROUGH SCHOOL DISTRICTS

Programs for school-age children work particularly well when they are coordinated through the school itself. Schools already have well-established, safe facilities and resources for programming, and the children themselves are already present when classes are over. In Texas, however, relatively few school districts participate in providing child care for their students.

In 1990, Wellesley College published the results of a 1988 study of the status of SACC programs in 38 states, including Texas (Fink, 1990). Texas was among the states reporting minimal school-district-assisted SACC. At the time of the study, not one of the 1093 Texas school districts reported assisting in providing after-school care.

A follow-up to this study conducted by Seppanen et al. (1991), and sponsored by the United States Department of Education, discovered that the nation's 13,500 public school-based SACC programs represented only 25 percent of the total existing SACC programs. It also revealed that school-based programs were more likely to serve children from low-income families than those sponsored by outside community organizations. Furthermore, while three-quarters of parents with children enrolled in SACC programs overall paid full fees, nearly half of the school-based SACCs in the United States used a sliding fee scale to determine tuition. In many instances, schools subsidized programs which were managed by administrators from the community, usually by providing school space.

REPORT CONTENT

This report describes the level of school district involvement in SACC in Texas, describes program elements, highlights the qualities of model programs, and reviews reasons for the lack of school-assisted SACC. It then presents a list of important factors in the establishment of such programs.

Schools already have well-established, safe facilities and resources for dynamic programming, and the children themselves are already present when classes are over.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Texas School Districts Today

In 1995, the Texas Employment Commission contracted with the Center for Social Work Research (CSWR) at The University of Texas at Austin, School of Social Work to survey Texas school districts about the current availability and components of district-assisted SACC, and to explore barriers preventing school districts from establishing care. Beyond simply providing care, school districts are well-placed to develop model programs demonstrating exemplary care. Interviews with experts (See Table 1 for list of affiliations of experts interviewed) and site visits document some possibilities for such care.

Table 1

Experts Interviewed for SACC Survey

Representatives of:

Association for Retarded Citizens
Austin Public Libraries
Texas Agricultural Extension Services
Texas Association for Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies
Texas Association for the Education of Young Children
Texas Education Agency
Texas Home Child Care Association
Texas Parks and Recreation Department
Texas Association for School-Age Care
Child Care Administrators
Church and Synagogue Groups
Corporate and Business Child Care Organizations
School-Age Child Care Providers
Youth and Family Service Organizations

RESULTS OF 1995 SURVEY

Survey of School-Age Child Care

In 1995, CSWR surveyed all 1,046 public school districts in the state. Over 80 percent of the superintendents or their designated representatives responded. Their answers provide the basis for information on district-assisted SACC. The following data refer to the numbers and percentages of those school districts that responded to the survey.

District Size as a Factor

In Texas, the larger school districts are more likely to have SACC programs. As indicated in Table 2, in 1995, 172 Texas districts who responded to the survey provided SACC programs. Only 4 percent of small districts -- those with one to 335 elementary students -- had school-age child care programs. By contrast, about 70 percent of very large districts, those with 2,311 to 198,013 elementary school pupils, had participated to some degree in SACC programs.

Table 2

Size of Districts with District-Assisted SACC Program

District Size	Students per District	Districts Assisting with SACC
Small	1 - 335	7
Medium	336 - 818	12
Large	819 - 2,310	35
Very Large	2,311 - 198,013	118
Overall	1 - 198,013	172

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Challenges to Providing SACC

Of the 667 responding school districts in Texas that did not have SACC programs in 1995, the majority (83 percent) were not considering implementing one. These districts cited a lack of perceived need, difficulties in implementation, and funding shortages.

The greatest challenges to providing SACC expressed by all Texas school districts, including those considering establishment of a program and those with a program already in place, were:

- funding (70 percent)
- transportation (33 percent)
- overburdened school teachers
- administrators (33 percent)

Only 16 percent of districts that assisted with SACC programs cited overburdened employees as a major challenge. School districts assisting in SACC reported problems with the need for available and appropriate space not shared with other activities.

District and Agency Responsibilities

The survey identified the following ten areas of responsibility intrinsic to the operation of a SACC program:

- day-to-day management
- program development
- program evaluation*
- funding
- advertising*
- maintenance*
- liability*
- legal aspects*
- enrollment
- policies and procedures*

Texas school districts that provided any degree of assistance to SACC tended to be the primary providers in six of these areas (marked with *). Non-profit agencies, then parents, followed by school districts, were responsible for funding.

Over half of the districts (55 percent) charged parents weekly rates from $2.36 to $30.00, with an average of $28.33. Twenty-eight percent of the districts collected monthly fees from parents, ranging from $9.81 to $74.00, with an average of $62.33. Almost half of the school districts indicated that state and federally subsidized slots were available to children. Sliding fee scales were offered to parents in 66 percent of the districts. Ninety-six percent of the districts provided space for the programs, 50 percent provided equipment, and 28 percent, supplies.

Appropriate Sites

In Texas, most district-assisted SACC programs were housed at elementary schools in the district, and were therefore easily accessible to young school children although not necessarily to middle-schoolers. Also, as Table 3 indicates, 85 percent of these programs shared space with

Table 3

Space Available to District-Assisted SACC Programs

Type of Space	Number of SACC Programs	Percentage of SACC Programs
Shared space at school	146	85%
Space solely for SACC	31	18%
Shared space at another location	6	4%
Other	5	3%

Beyond the simple provision of care, school districts are well-placed to develop model programs demonstrating exemplary care.

other after-school activities. The types of space most frequently provided were playground, auditorium or cafeteria, and gym (Table 4). Programs that took place in classrooms tended to engage in whole-group activities rather than breaking into activity centers.

Table 4

Types of Space Provided for District-Assisted SACC Programs

Type of Space	Number of SACC Programs	Percentage of SACC Programs
Playground	138	81%
Auditorium/Cafeteria Space	124	73%
Gym	113	66%
Classroom Space	70	41%
Playing Field	55	32%
Library	44	26%
Other	12	7%
Computer Lab	8	5%
Multi-purpose Room	2	1%

Being "kicked out" for P.T.A. meetings or cheerleading practices was frustrating, not so much for the practical difficulties in moving, but because it affected the children's self-esteem.

Table 5

Activities Offered by District-Assisted SACC Programs

Activity	Number of SACC Programs	Percentage of SACC Programs
Indoor Time	164	95%
Outdoor Time	151	86%
Tutoring/Homework Help	134	78%
Structured, Adult-Directed Activities	131	76%
Activity Center	127	74%
Small Group Activities	118	69%
Sports/Physical Activities	117	68%
Art Materials Available for Children's Use	113	66%
Large Group Activities	110	64%
Unstructured Time When Students Decide What To Do	116	62%
Computers	60	35%
Television	57	33%
Academic Activities	53	31%
Field Trips	50	29%
Drug Awareness/Prevention	41	24%
Other	11	6%
Guest Speakers	3	2%
Scouting	2	1%
Movies	2	1%
Reading	2	1%

District Involvement in Program Development

About half of the school districts participated in program development activities, although non-profit agencies were primarily responsible for SACC program development. Table 5 illustrates the types of activities found in district-assisted programs. Ninety-five percent of the district-assisted SACC programs offered indoor time to children, and 88 percent outdoor time. Additionally, 78 percent included tutoring and homework help. Eighty-seven percent of Texas after-school programs provided a snack for the children. Other resources SACCs offer are listed in Table 6.

Table 6

Other Resources Provided Through District-Assisted SACC Programs

Resource Provided	Number of SACC Programs	Percentage of SACC Programs
Snack	122	87%
Neighborhood Resources*	53	38%
Health Services	10	7%
Social Services	8	6%
Other	7	5%
Dinner	2	1%
YMCA Services	2	1%

** Such as personnel from libraries, sports programs, and voluntary groups*

Problems Associated with District-Assisted SACC Programs

School-age child care faces two major problems. The first relates to efforts to initiate school-based programs; the second involves programs that are already established and operating. School district personnel emphasized three reasons for the decision not to offer SACC. Officials felt that:

1) there was only minimal need in their districts for an after-school care program
2) associated financial problems were insurmountable
3) the complexities involved would be overwhelming

On the other hand, 57 percent of participating school districts reported the problem of wear and tear on the facility was their main problem, while costs to parents was the second most prevalent concern. Difficulty in gaining access to school facilities due to resistance by school teachers and staff, and shortage of slots for children of low-income families were also frequently noted problems.

A major problem at most sites in Texas school-based programs was the lack of a consistently available space. Being "kicked out" for P.T.A. meetings or cheerleading practices was frustrating, not so much for the practical difficulties in moving, but because it affected the children's self-esteem. Children who are shuffled around perceive themselves as second-class citizens.

Weather in Texas can also play an important role in the organization of space. Programs that occupy playgrounds need shelters from the afternoon sun or to protect the children from rain. Mosquitoes curtail outdoor activities in certain months of the year. And at a central Texas site, on at least one occasion when the program was barred from both the cafeteria and the gym because of use by other groups, a cold front moved in and prevented the children from playing outside. The group was forced to spend the afternoon in the school foyer until the parents arrived.

What the Experts Say

A series of interviews with experts in school-age child care confirmed that funding and other supports for SACC are in short supply. Moreover, although there is tremendous need for programs in rural areas, funding and transportation issues particularly restrict efforts to provide after-school care for children outside urban settings. Experts report that major parental concerns include the cost of SACC participation, children's safety, program quality, children's enjoyment levels, hours of operation, and the inclusion of "enrichment and extracurricular" activities.

According to experts, most Texas SACC programs are now on site at school, and run by local, non-profit agencies such as the YMCA. Typically, they have use of the school's cafeteria, gym, and playground, which are considered "adequate" facilities by experts, but do not meet the standards for a model program.

According to experts, most Texas SACC programs are now on site at school, and run by local, non-profit agencies such as the YMCA.

COMPONENTS OF MODEL SACC PROGRAMS

For a quality school-age program to be operated by well-trained and well-paid staff, financial subsidy by a school district is needed. A quality program will have its own space, so that other activities will not displace the child care, and so that materials and projects can be stored from one day to the next. Quality after-school programs will impose limited structure on the children and focus on recreational and leisure activities, in contrast to the school day's greater confinement. Experimenting with skills of all types can help children become self-confident learners. Quality programs will give children the opportunity to practice physical dexterity and coordination in unstructured play or to explore enticing materials and learn about the world on their own. Academic assistance will be available, for children whose parents request they do their homework, or for children who choose to do it. In addition, quality programs should offer comprehensive services, including health and social services, on site or through the school district, making them full participants in the community as advocates for children's well-being.

Experts described necessary and important qualities of model SACC in more detail, as outlined below:

Safety and Security

After-school programs help keep children safe, including those children who would otherwise walk home from school through dangerous neighborhoods. For children whose home life is chaotic, after-school programs can provide the structure that feels safe without the greater rigidity of the school day. A safe play time can also allow children who handle large responsibilities at home to be children. Well-trained and caring adult staff can serve as role models and mentors.

Social Growth and Leadership Skills

Children can participate in planning what they and others do, thus fostering social and leadership skills. Some of the benefits of a program that supports the development of positive social skills include:

1) the opportunity for children to learn how to resolve conflicts with peers
2) the opportunity for children to grow in their ability to relate to each other in informal environments

Children have a place for more activities with friendly adults, rather than unsupervised play on the street.

Parental and Societal Benefits

A model SACC program may provide parents with opportunities to interact with school personnel assisting with the program. SACC program personnel can act as liaisons between schools and parents, providing information when parents pick up their children. Parents can be more productive on the job when their children are known to be safe and well-supervised.

Society benefits also. Besides being less likely to engage in destructive behaviors, young people in SACC centers can go on field trips to community institutions, such as nursing homes, or become involved in projects like cleaning up a park in the neighborhood. This type of activity helps generate a sense of responsibility and improved self-esteem by allowing students to see that they can make a difference.

Support for Children of Low-Income Families

All children benefit from quality after-school care. After-school providers can assist in identifying health, psychological, and academic needs early on, and provide assistance and timely referral to resources. Children gain exposure to experiences, materials, and a diversity of people. The types of enriching activities that can be presented in SACC programs, as well as the modeling of healthy and respectful interactions between people, can be beneficial to many groups of children. For families with limited resources, access to the advantages of quality SACC may be particularly valuable.

A SACC program, in addition to giving academic assistance and a place for supervised play, both structured and unstructured, can enrich children by offering access to dance lessons, gymnastics, computers, and more. Parents want their children to be exposed to interesting experiences, and experts agree on the value of this element of SACC. In addition, some parents would like to see job skills training offered, particularly for middle school children, and the teaching of awareness and prevention of drugs, gang behavior, and teenage pregnancy. A quality program can be a large factor in developing a secure, informed child.

THE DOWN SIDE

On the other hand, experts point out that low-quality programs can be harmful to children. Some settings offer no activities or activities unsuitable for a child's stage of development. This "warehousing" of children can lead to boredom, slowed acquisition of age-appropriate skills, and ultimately, a lessening of self-esteem. If not stimulating, a program can add stress to parents through children's opposition to attending it. On the other hand, if a program has too much structure or required work, children can begin to feel burned out. The program should present a balance of learning and fun.

Other concerns about the quality of after-school care include issues related to provider staff. Poorly-trained providers may not extend proper care. Unqualified people can also model inappropriate behavior. Experts and parents see the need for low child to staff ratios, well-trained workers, and educated staff who respect children and know how to communicate with them at different age levels.

The part-time status of child care workers who are employed solely during after-school hours contributes to difficulties in maintaining well-trained staff members and to high turnover rates. In addition to short hours, staff members often receive a low hourly wage that makes investment in education courses for themselves unaffordable. This is an especially meaningful limitation, since staff education and training are major factors in the quality of SACC programs.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

In addition to those discussed above, experts raised a number of more concrete issues:

Funding and Affordable Care

Cost is a primary problem associated with SACC. Some low-income families qualifying for state and federal child care subsidies administered through the state's Child Care Management System (CCMS) receive partial subsidies so their children can have care. Many families can afford to pay for care without financial assistance. However, many families do not fall into either of these categories and consequently have difficulty obtaining SACC. These include working poor and middle income families. In the case of families with more than one child needing care, the problem is exacerbated.

Educating Parents about the Importance of SACC

In addition to having access to financial assistance, parents need to be educated about crucial benefits of after-school care, how to select quality child care, and how to gauge when it is appropriate for children to begin staying home alone. Often, as a child reaches upper elementary grades, the family budget demands that child care funds be used elsewhere. Experts state, however, that older children should continue to receive adult after-school supervision and care. As children grow older, peer pressure to misbehave also increases, and SACC continues to be valuable. SACC programs can be the most secure place for children of all ages to be when their parents are not home.

Rural Area Needs

Two major barriers that preclude child care participation in rural areas are lack of available programs and lack of transportation to and from those few that exist. Children in rural areas often have school bus rides that are so long parents use them as a substitute for child care. Parents often work far from home, resulting in their children being left by themselves longer than urban children. When after-school programs do exist, parents frequently are unable to pick their children up from care on time, due to long commutes from their place of work. Another issue is that some rural school administrators feel mothers should stay home with their children, and resist involvement of their schools in child care.

Needs of Middle School Children

There is little after-school programming appropriate for middle school children, although the need is great. Children of this age are contending with physiological changes and the emergence of new developmental issues. Rather than the "child care" designed for younger children, older students require challenging, age-relevant activities in SACC.

Hours of Operation

It is difficult for many parents to pick up their children by six p.m., which is when most SACC programs finish for the day. Because providers must pay staff on a weekly basis, parents are usually locked into paying for an entire week's care, even if they need care only a few hours. Other problems connected with hours of operation include the need for SACC programs open on days and when school is out, during the summer, and on holidays.

Spaces

There should be space that is guaranteed to always be available for the SACC program. Furthermore, an after-school program should have both indoor and outdoor space. Many experts feel there should ideally be a variety of types of spaces from which children can choose.

School Responsibility

Schools need to work with parents and agencies that offer after-school programs. School district participation leads to the smoothest transition and programming for school-age children. Experts believe that schools need to accept the necessity of after-school care, rather than see their responsibility as time-limited, from 7:30 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.

Outside Agency SACC Management

Agencies that operate after-school programs often have problems obtaining space and materials. Many programs are housed solely in school cafeterias or gyms. Although a classroom environment would be more appropriate for

after-school activities, teachers are often unwilling to share their rooms and resources with SACC programs. In addition, space for storage of project materials is often lacking. Many experts suggest a permanent classroom dedicated to after-school care, with its own supply of materials and adequate storage.

Conclusions

School-age child care has received only peripheral attention in Texas. Nevertheless, it is of great importance to the health, safety, and education of major segments of Texas's young population. Good quality care for these children benefits children, parents, and the community. The results of the CSWR survey highlight several factors that contribute to ensuring the success of a SACC program in Texas. They are predicated on the use of schools as sites for the programs, and include the following:

FACTORS FOR SUCCESS

Funding

• *Make outside funding a priority* in order to subsidize the program and provide needs-based tuition discounts. Tuition revenue alone cannot meet the costs of building and maintaining an after-school program.

• *Employ a grant writer* with previous experience who is able to dedicate most of her or his time to grantsmanship. If funding is not available to employ a grant writer, request volunteer help. There are numerous grants available in Texas for worthy, well-presented projects. Because most funding agencies require some degree of documentation and reporting after the grant is received, the time and procedures involved with this aspect of funding can become onerous for program administrators. Also, reliance on one grant is not advisable, since it may be discontinued.

• *Overlap resources* with other children's programs. New playground equipment can benefit both SACC and the school. Other types of cooperation--shared staff, for example--can also help diminish costs.

• *Solicit donations* from local businesses and private citizens, in the form of money, services, or supplies. The CSWR survey showed that soliciting food donations was particularly successful in Texas, because restaurants and grocery stores tended to have standard procedures to accommodate such requests in order to dispose of excess stock and to receive a tax break. Private citizens were also a source of support.

• *Budget for a substantial snack* for after-school children, particularly for the sake of those from low-income families. A significant finding of the CSWR survey of Texas's SACC programs was the importance of including snack costs in plans. Often grant money or local donations are the primary sources for snack funding. Programs that are eligible for the Child Care and Adult Food Program (CCAFP) can apply for reimbursement for snack food.

Staffing

• *Evaluate all hiring options.* College students in education and mothers usually have a genuine interest in children. They can provide invaluable assistance to the primary workers of child care centers. In some cases they are the primary workers.

• *Seek to offer benefits* as an incentive to attract qualified, dedicated staff. This is particularly important because of the part-time status of most workers, who are unlikely to be insured. Another offer that can sometimes be made is that of a full-time position by organizing multi-

task workloads, such as working part-time with the children directly and part-time at office work. A discount on child care may also be offered.

• *Treat staff as professionals*, with open communication and an encouragement of group effort. There should be a support system in place, and each staff member should be encouraged to contribute to the program through his or her areas of interest and expertise. Appropriate training opportunities should be offered. A positive atmosphere with high expectations results in quality performance.

Program

• *Expand SACC program hours* in areas of Texas with varied parental work shifts, like those found at factories, or remote job sites, such as in sparsely-populated rural areas. Hours of availability will determine those parents' use and support of an SACC program.

• *Develop age-appropriate programs* specifically designed for school-age children. Differentiate the program components from those of the school day.

• *Develop space assigned to the program* so that students and teachers can store materials and projects safely and so children will feel "at home" in the after-school program.

School/Program Relations

• *In rural areas, educate the community* about the benefits the program brings to children and families. In such sections of Texas, there is a heightened need for participation and cooperation of members of the community, including children, parents, community resource workers, and businesses, in order to invent creative solutions to problems of rural programs. The effort in rural areas usually requires more coordination in order to be able to overcome lack of transportation, lack of facilities, and negative attitudes toward child care.

• *Involve the principal* from the start, so he or she has a stake in the success and continuation of a program. Community representatives can help articulate the necessity of SACC to school administrators.

• *Strive for open communication and good rapport with school principals* to gain cooperation of the whole school staff. After-school programs should seek to make the principal comfortable with the program and to earn his or her trust as well as that of the school staff. The support of the superintendent and the cooperation of school principals is important to the development of SACC.

Works Cited

Center for Social Work Research. *School-age Child Care in Texas Public Schools.* University of Texas at Austin. Austin: School of Social Work, 1995.

Fink, D. B. *School-age Child Care in America: Findings to a 1988 Study.* Wellesley: Center for Research on Women, 1990.

Galinsky, E., and D. S. Friedman. *Education Before School: Investing in Quality Child Care.* Committee for Economic Development. New York: Scholastic, Inc., 1993.

Seppanen, P. S., J. M. Love, D. K. DeVries, and L. Bernstein. *National Study of Before and After School Programs.* (Report No. PS021203). Portsmouth, NH: RMC Research Corporation, 1991.

Texas Workforce Commission. *Employer-Assisted Dependent Care.* Austin: Texas Workforce Commission, 1997.

Publication Center
The Child Care/Work and Family Clearinghouse
Texas Workforce Commission

Texas Workforce COMMISSION

Texas Work & Family Clearinghouse

For further information and to place orders:

Telephone: (512) 936-3228
Fax: (512) 936-3255

Mail: 101 E. 15th Street, Room 416T
Austin, TX 78778

E-mail: wkfamily@mail.capnet.state.tx.us

Web-Site: www.twc.state.tx.us/wrkfrcdev/wfchp.html

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Single copies of publications are available without charge. Please inquire about prices for multiple copies.